

# Uber woes mount ahead of workplace probe report

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Uber has parted ways with another top executive, in the latest dent to the reputation of the ridesharing giant as it prepares to release the results of a probe into workplace misconduct.

The executive, Eric Alexander, read and discussed medical information about a woman raped in India in 2014 during an Uber ride, according to reports in the New York Times and Recode.

Alexander, who headed Uber's Asia-Pacific operations, showed the records to Uber chief executive Travis Kalanick and others, the reports said.

An Uber spokeswoman told AFP on Thursday that Alexander is "no longer with the company," but declined to comment on the reasons for his departure or on the reports on his handling of the India rape case.

In the case, a 26-year-old woman was assaulted after hailing an Uber ride.

An Indian court in 2015 sentenced the Uber driver to life in prison in a case that inflamed fears over sexual violence in the capital.

The reports about Alexander come amid a far-reaching investigation into misconduct and workplace practices at Uber, which operates in dozens of countries and is valued at some \$68 billion.

Earlier this week, Uber said it had fired 20 people following preliminary results of the investigation.

The on-demand ride service said the terminations came as it looked into a total of 215 claims of discrimination, harassment, unprofessional behavior, bullying, retaliation and "physical security."

A report containing recommendations for changes inside Uber to cure workplace ills was to be released next week.

Uber has seen a shake-up in its executive ranks as it works through a series of scandals that included disclosures about a culture of sexism, cut-throat workplace tactics, and covert use of law enforcement-evading software.

Jackdaw Research analyst Jan Dawson referred to the incident involving the Uber executive in India as a "notable and damaging" revelation, calling it "absurd" that an internal probe depicted by the company as far-reaching seemed to have spared the executive.

"Overall, plenty more evidence here of both the nasty culture and the difficulty of turning it around," Dawson said in a blog post.

## **Stolen secrets?**

In addition to the workplace investigation, Uber faces a potentially damaging lawsuit over trade secrets allegedly stolen from Alphabet's self-driving car unit Waymo.

Uber fired executive Anthony Levandowski, who came from the unit previously known as Google car, for failing to meet a deadline to turn over information for an internal investigation.

Waymo's lawsuit contends that Levandowski in December 2015 downloaded files from a highly confidential design server to a laptop and took the data with him to the startup.

Uber has lost other key executives this year and one report said it is the subject of a criminal investigation.

Top engineering executive Amit Singhal resigned in February after the ride-sharing titan learned he ended his career at Google after a sexual harassment complaint, reports said.

In March, Uber's p president, Jeff Jones, resigned after just six months.

The woes so far have not hit Uber's growth trajectory, but some analysts say Uber's problems won't fixed without a change in leadership.

"Firing 20 people is just a Band-Aid to act as if they are doing something," analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group said of Uber.

"Nothing will change" as long as Kalanick, "who seems to be the source of many problems" remains on top, the analyst argued.

Kalanick, who was also embarrassed this year for a video where he berates an Uber driver, has said Uber is seeking a number two [executive](#) as part of an effort to restore confidence.

Uber's biggest problem may be that it is "bleeding out cash," according Enderle.

Uber said that its revenue during the first three months of this year rose some 18 percent to \$3.4 billion, but the company logged a loss of \$708 million without taking into account stock compensation for employees.

Uber cited the numbers as progress, given that losses in the preceding quarter totaled \$991 million.

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